

Mike,

As you know I grew up on the Flat, but these days I live in the state of Maryland, and I only visit Plattsburgh on rare occasions. Recently I had the pleasure of spending a beautiful mid-summer's evening, and morning, with you and Lisa, Jim, and Steve.

It was great to walk downtown for dinner at the fairly new Sports Bar with sidewalk dining. Everything about the dinner was perfect, and it felt good to be in a place where everyone knew my sister's names, if not mine. I had forgotten how compact the city is, and how enjoyable and relaxing it is to just walk to and from downtown.

Sunday morning as we visited the city's new lakeside boat docks, and maritime support facility I was impressed more by what is, than what was. It's clear the past has a powerful influence on Plattsburgh's growth and development. But even though the past is interesting, like it or not, it's not where we live. As we walked around looking at the city, I thought about how Plattsburgh has changed within my lifetime. I thought about changes to the businesses, buildings, and city's infrastructure, then realized cities aren't just objects, or places on a map. A city's life comes from the people.

After spending an hour or so touring the old city, on foot, with you this past Sunday morning I will never try not to compare today's Plattsburgh to the Plattsburgh of any other time in the past again. It is what it is. Perfectly imperfect, a place to enjoy life, and a place to dream about - and work for a better future.

The walking/cycling trail along the Saranac River bank in the City of Plattsburgh is great. That said, I've only walked it from the upper end of Smith Street (down on the Flat) to the Saranac Street Bridge. I agree with you, there are a few places along the riverfront that would be nicer with a little sidewalk cafe, or bistro, or nice apartments.

I also think it should be mandatory for every city resident to tour the sewage treatment facility - or at least every school-aged child...at several points in their educational experience. People should be educated concerning what is lawful to flush into sanitary sewers, and what may be spread on the ground (or buried)...which eventually finds its way into the water table, streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes. People should receive education concerning pill disposal...and why flushing pills down the toilet may not be good for wildlife. How pure is the water released by the sewage treatment facility? Is it safe to drink? Does it contain harmful chemicals? What can be done to make the treated effluent more clean/less harmful? What effect does the outflow from the facility have on the lake (ecosystem), recreational fishing, the marina, residents along Cumberland Avenue? What happens to the solid waste taken from the treatment facility? How much does it cost to haul the solid waste away? Does it have any beneficial uses, or is it toxic, noxious, or potentially harmful? How does illegal dumping of oil, paint, chemicals, medicine, etc... impact the cost (to city taxpayers) of operating the sewage treatment facility?

- There is no need to send me an answer these questions. It would be good for everyone in

the city to know this sort of thing. The sewage treatment facility has always seemed to be the butt of jokes, and spoken of in cynical terms. In fact, it may just be one of the city's greatest success stories...something the people can be proud of, right along with the Municipal Lighting Department. Not kidding.

Bob